MARVEL KNIGHTS®
MARVEL PSR 6
MARK MILLAR • TERRY DODSON • RACHEL DODSON
SPIDER-MAN®
VENOMOUS
PART 2

PREVIOUSLY IN SPIDER-MAN

"VENOMOUS"

Peter Parker woke up from the battle of his life to find himself broke, badly injured and his Aunt May still missing after a mysterious kidnapping. His wife, Mary Jane, refused to stay in hiding any longer and has promised to help him, but their investigations are going nowhere. Patrolling New York, he's found nothing except a drug-addled, rampaging Doctor Octopus and a problem with a pursuing SWAT team he never expected...

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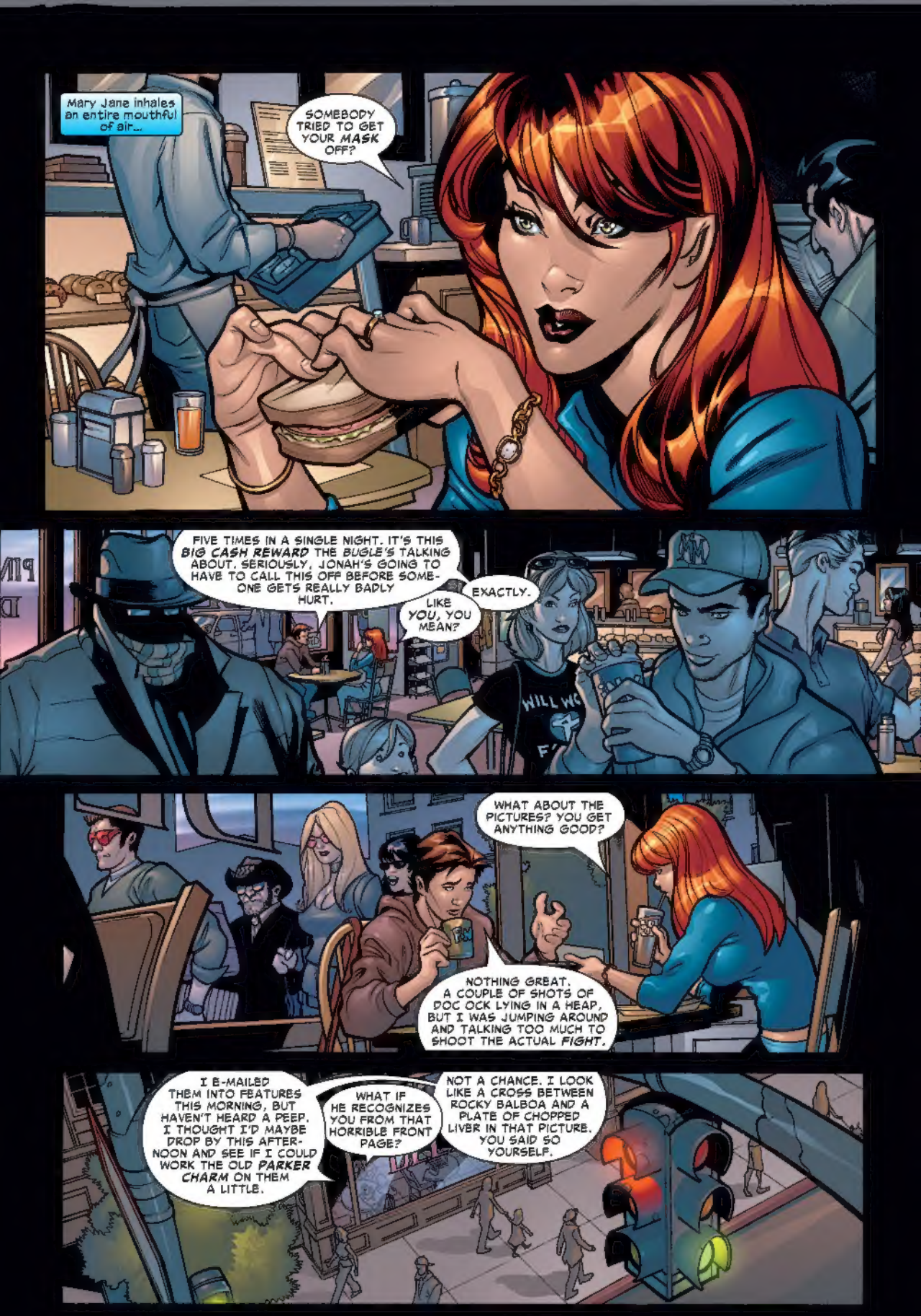
This is what happens when the *Daily Bugle* offers five million dollars to anyone who figures out my secret identity: Even the *COPS* start going a little nuts.
GET HIS MASK OFF! I GOT HIM! I GOT HIM!

What were they doing here anyway? Why was a SWAT team transporting Doctor Octopus around at midnight? And do they seriously think they can TAKE ME DOWN like this?
I might have gone a little crazy since someone snatched AUNT MAY. I might have trouble STANDING UP since I climbed out of that HOSPITAL BED.
I might even be at HALF my usual STRENGTH here...
...but I could STILL eat these clowns for BREAKFAST.
AGHGH!!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? TAKE HIM DOWN! TAKE HIM DOWN!

HOLD YOUR FIRE! WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON HERE?
SPIDER-MAN'S RESISTING ARREST, CAPTAIN LAMONT! WE NEED AIR-SUPPORT FAST OR WE'RE GONNA LOSE THIS PUNK!
EVERYBODY STAND DOWN! YOU THINK I DON'T READ THE NEWSPAPERS OR SOMETHING?
JUST GET DOCTOR OCTOPUS BACK IN THE TRUCK AND BE GLAD I DON'T HAVE YOU IDIOTS ON REPORT FOR THIS!
TESTS, they said. What kind of tests do they need to do on DOCTOR OCTOPUS that they can't do in JAIL?
A jet of webbing and I launch myself across the street. I'm hurting a little from the couple of PUNCHES they landed, but something about this has the hairs on the back of my NECK standing up.
WARREN'S


Mary Jane inhales an entire mouthful of air...
SOMEBODY TRIED TO GET YOUR MASK OFF?
FIVE TIMES IN A SINGLE NIGHT. IT'S THIS BIG CASH REWARD THE BUGLE'S TALKING ABOUT. SERIOUSLY, JONAH'S GOING TO HAVE TO CALL THIS OFF BEFORE SOMEONE GETS REALLY BADLY HURT.
EXACTLY.
LIKE YOU, YOU MEAN?
WHAT ABOUT THE PICTURES? YOU GET ANYTHING GOOD?
NOTHING GREAT. A COUPLE OF SHOTS OF DOC OCK LYING IN A HEAP, BUT I WAS JUMPING AROUND AND TALKING TOO MUCH TO SHOOT THE ACTUAL FIGHT.
I E-MAILED THEM INTO FEATURES THIS MORNING, BUT HAVEN'T HEARD A PEEP. I THOUGHT I'D MAYBE DROP BY THIS AFTERNOON AND SEE IF I COULD WORK THE OLD PARKER CHARM ON THEM A LITTLE.
WHAT IF HE RECOGNIZES YOU FROM THAT HORRIBLE FRONT PAGE?
NOT A CHANCE. I LOOK LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN ROCKY BALBOA AND A PLATE OF CHOPPED LIVER IN THAT PICTURE. YOU SAID SO YOURSELF.

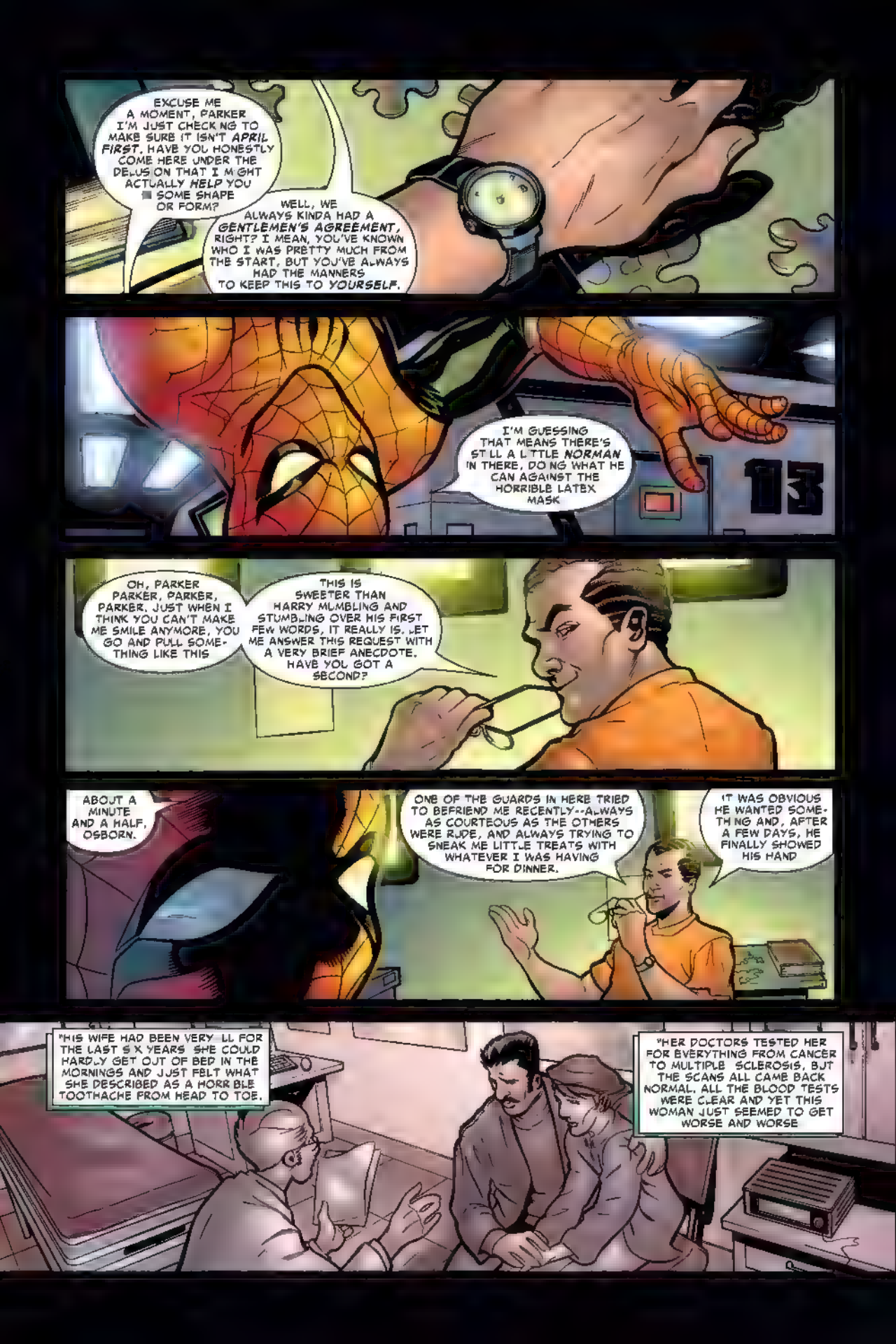
ANYWAY, HOW'S YOUR *OWN* INVESTIGATION GOING? YOU MANAGE TO GET ME A LIST OF WHO'S *ACTIVE* RIGHT NOW?
WELL, I DON'T WANT TO SCARE YOU, BUT YOU'VE GOT *TWENTY-EIGHT* ACTIVE SUPER-CRIMINALS OUT THERE. *STILL*, VENOM'S AT THE TOP OF MY LIST.
FELICIA CALLED AT THE CRACK OF DAWN AND SAID SOMETHING REALLY BIG WAS GOING ON *UPTOWN* TONIGHT, TOO.
SHE DIDN'T HAVE ANY SPECIFICS, BUT SAID THE SUPER-VILLAIN A-LIST WAS GETTING TOGETHER FOR SOME BIG AUCTION THING, AND GET THIS, *EDDIE BROCK* APPEARS TO BE AT THE HEART OF IT. *COINCIDENCE?*
I DON'T KNOW. I REALLY DON'T. I JUST WISH YOU'D ACTUALLY *LISTEN* TO ME FOR A CHANGE AND GET OUT OF *NEW YORK* RIGHT NOW.
I LOVE YOU, PETER. I WISH OUR LIFE WAS A LITTLE LESS *COMPLICATED* SOMETIMES, BUT I LOVE YOU MORE THAN I'VE EVER LOVED ANYONE, AND YOU'RE *NOT* DOING THIS ON YOUR OWN.
BESIDES, I'M NOT *COMPLETELY* HELPLESS HERE...
THAT BETTER NOT BE WHAT I *THINK* IT IS.
I'M NOT GOING TO END UP LIKE *GWEN*, TIGER. I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE IT, BUT THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS.
Man, what can I say? She's being paranoid? Everything is really just hunky-dory and I'll always be there to protect her?
I couldn't protect Gwen, I couldn't protect Uncle Ben, and I couldn't even protect *AUNT MAY*...

Can I BLAME her for trying to avoid becoming yet another name in my growing list of STATISTICS?
MISTER JAMESON?
DAILY BUGLE
HOLY GEEZ! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'M HERE FOR THE MONEY, SIR.
WHAT?
WELL, I'M KINDA TIGHT FOR CASH RIGHT NOW, AND I FIGURED IF ANYBODY DESERVED TO MAKE A LITTLE DOUGH FROM MY SECRET IDENTITY, IT MIGHT AS WELL BE ME, RIGHT?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
EVERYBODY SELLS OUT SOONER OR LATER, AND LET'S FACE IT, MAN: FIGHTING THE LIZARD AND STUFF DON'T EXACTLY PAY THE BILLS, RIGHT?
THE NAME'S OTIS KINCAID, MISTER JAMESON, AND I'M THE CREDIT CONTROLLER OVER AT MARSH INSURANCE BROKERS. YOU'VE NO IDEA HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO GET THAT OFF MY CHEST AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.
SECURITY--IN MY OFFICE RIGHT AWAY, BOYS. WE GOT ANOTHER FRUIT-LOOP DRIBBLING ON THE CARPET.

H-HEY! GET YOUR HANDS OFFA ME, YOU PIGS!
THIS HAPPEN MUCH?
ONLY ABOUT TEN TIMES A DAY, BUT HE'S GOTTA BE THE SHORTEST ONE WE'VE HAD SO FAR. BOY LOOKS MORE LIKE ANT-MAN THAN SPIDER-MAN.
WELL, WELL, WELL. IF IT ISN'T MISTER HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHER. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, PARKER? SOME OF THE BIGGER BOYS BEEN STEALING YOUR LUNCH MONEY AGAIN?
OOH, LOOK AT YOU ALL BRIGHT AND HAPPY. WHAT'S UP, JONAH? YOU FINALLY FOUND THAT NICKEL YOU LOST?
AND WHAT'S WITH THIS CRAZY SPIDER-MAN STUNT? ISN'T THIS, LIKE, THE ELEVENTH TIME YOU'VE PULLED THE OLD "CASH-REWARD-FOR-HIS-SECRET-IDENTITY" THING?
WHO CARES? SOME ANONYMOUS BILLIONAIRE DONATES FIVE MILLION BUCKS TO BOOST OUR CIRCULATION, WHO AM I TO SAY NO?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ANYWAY, PARKER? WE'RE TRYING TO PUT THIS STORY TO BED ABOUT ALL THOSE BREAK-INS AT OSCORP INTERNATIONAL.
I TOOK SOME PICTURES OF SPIDER-MAN TAKING DOWN DOCTOR OCTOPUS LAST NIGHT, AND WONDERED WHAT YOU GUYS THOUGHT OF THEM.
THAT AMATEUR CRAP? THEY'RE ALL OUT OF FOCUS AND COMPLETELY OFF-CENTER, PARKER. YOU WERE DOING BETTER WORK THAN THIS WHEN YOU WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL!
BESIDES, HOW LONG WAS HE ON THE LOOSE OUT THERE, HUH? FIVE MINUTES? TEN AT THE MOST? HE DIDN'T EVEN KILL ANYBODY! THIS HARDLY MADE THE LATE-NIGHT NEWS!
HEY, DAD. YOU READY TO GO GRAB SOME LUNCH?
JOHN?

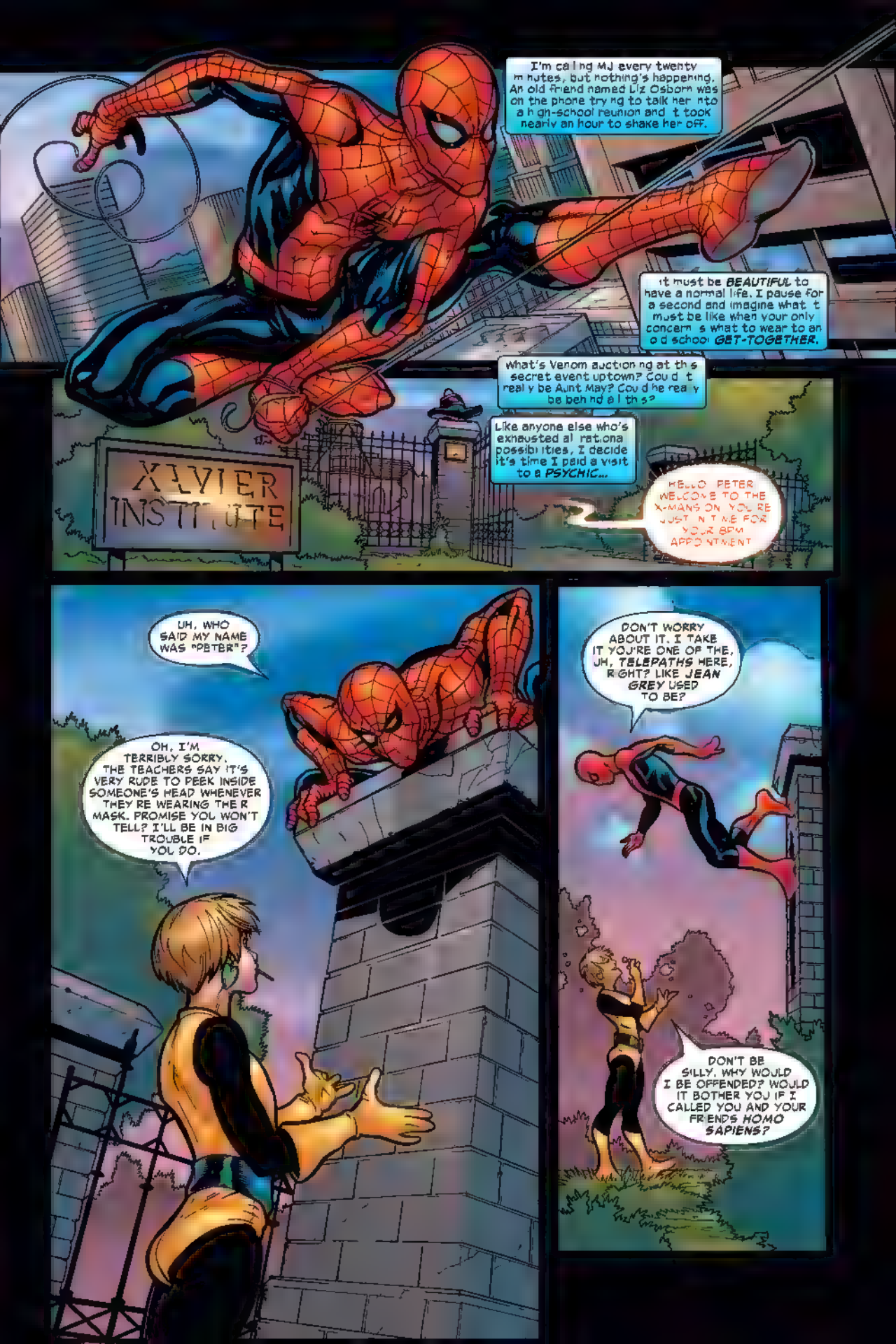
HEY, PETER. HOW'S IT GOING, MAN?
AH, NOT TOO BAD. JUST TRYING TO SQUEEZE A LITTLE CASH OUT OF YOUR OLD MAN AGAIN. YOU STILL WORKING AT THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES OVER IN QUEENS?
ONLY TEMPORARILY, PARKER. ONLY TEMPORARILY. JOHN-JOHN'S BEEN TALKING TO HIS AIR-FORCE BUDDIES ABOUT GOING UP IN A PLANE AGAIN. AIN'T THAT RIGHT, KID?
YEAH, WELL, ONLY AS AN INSTRUCTOR, BUT IT'D BE PRETTY COOL TO GET MY WINGS BACK, PETER. IT'S WEIRD USING A SIDEWALK AGAIN WHEN YOU'VE SPENT HALF YOUR LIFE IN THE AIR.
I HEAR YA, MAN.
TELL YOU WHAT, PARKER: I KNOW YOU AND THE WIFE GOT DEBT PROBLEMS RIGHT NOW, SO HOW ABOUT I GIVE YOU FIVE HUNDRED BUCKS FOR THIS SHOT OF SPIDER-MAN SLIPPING IN SOME DOG-MESS HERE?
WHAT? HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR DEBT PROBLEMS?
"EX-SUPERMODEL HAS HER MACY'S CHECKS BOUNCED BY THE BANK"? IT'S TOMORROW'S FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE, KIDDO.
TALK TO ROBBIE ABOUT THE VOUCHER, AND TELL THOSE BRATS IN YOUR CLASS I WAS ASKING AFTER THEM, HUH?
An anonymous billionaire donates five million dollars just to give me GRIEF. This just gets worse by the second.

My Aunt May is seventy-two years old. She pops twe ve pi ls a day and has suffered three heart attacks in the ast seven years.
OF COURSE she's dead, common sense wh spers in my ear. The stress ALONE shou d have finished whatever that kidnapper started, but I have to keep going. I can t just GIVE UP.
I KNOW YOU KNOW I'M DANGLING HERE, OSBORN, SO YOU CAN STOP TRYING TO ANNOY ME.
ANNOYING YOU S THE ONLY PLEASURE I'VE GOT LEFT IN LIFE, PARKER.
WHAT DO YOU WANT ANYWAY, BOY? CAN'T YOU SEE I'VE GOT PLACES TO GO AND PEOPLE TO SEE? I HOPE THIS DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH DEAR, OLD AUNT MAY AGAIN? SHE S NOT STILL MISSING, S SHE?
DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK. IF IT WASN'T FOR THE LACK OF GLOATING YOU'D BE TOP OF MY LIST FOR THIS KIDNAPPING
SO WHY DROP BY?
TO SEE IF YOU CAN SHED A LITTLE LIGHT ON WHAT HAPPENED TO HER. I'VE GONE OVER THE DETAILS A M LLION T MES, AND STILL COME UP WITH NOTHING, BUT MAYBE THERE'S SOMETH NG I'M MISSING HERE.
MAYBE I'M JUST TOO NORMAL TO SEE WHAT THIS GUY'S UP TO, BUT YOU'RE THE KING OF THE KOOKS, R GHT? MAYBE YOU CAN FIGURE OUT WHY HE HASN'T BEEN BACK IN TOUCH


EXCUSE ME A MOMENT, PARKER I'M JUST CHECKING TO MAKE SURE IT ISN'T APRIL FIRST. HAVE YOU HONESTLY COME HERE UNDER THE DELUSION THAT I MIGHT ACTUALLY HELP YOU IN SOME SHAPE OR FORM?
WELL, WE ALWAYS KINDA HAD A GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT, RIGHT? I MEAN, YOU'VE KNOWN WHO I WAS PRETTY MUCH FROM THE START, BUT YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD THE MANNERS TO KEEP THIS TO YOURSELF.
I'M GUESSING THAT MEANS THERE'S STILL A LITTLE NORMAN IN THERE, DOING WHAT HE CAN AGAINST THE HORRIBLE LATEX MASK
13
OH, PARKER PARKER, PARKER, PARKER. JUST WHEN I THINK YOU CAN'T MAKE ME SMILE ANYMORE, YOU GO AND PULL SOMETHING LIKE THIS
THIS IS SWEETER THAN HARRY MUMBLING AND STUMBLING OVER HIS FIRST FEW WORDS, IT REALLY IS. LET ME ANSWER THIS REQUEST WITH A VERY BRIEF ANECDOTE. HAVE YOU GOT A SECOND?
ABOUT A MINUTE AND A HALF, OSBORN.
ONE OF THE GUARDS IN HERE TRIED TO BEFRIEND ME RECENTLY--ALWAYS AS COURTEOUS AS THE OTHERS WERE RUDE, AND ALWAYS TRYING TO SNEAK ME LITTLE TREATS WITH WHATEVER I WAS HAVING FOR DINNER.
IT WAS OBVIOUS HE WANTED SOMETHING AND, AFTER A FEW DAYS, HE FINALLY SHOWED HIS HAND
"HIS WIFE HAD BEEN VERY ILL FOR THE LAST SIX YEARS. SHE COULD HARDLY GET OUT OF BED IN THE MORNINGS AND JUST FELT WHAT SHE DESCRIBED AS A HORRIBLE TOOTHACHE FROM HEAD TO TOE.
"HER DOCTORS TESTED HER FOR EVERYTHING FROM CANCER TO MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, BUT THE SCANS ALL CAME BACK NORMAL. ALL THE BLOOD TESTS WERE CLEAR AND YET THIS WOMAN JUST SEEMED TO GET WORSE AND WORSE

"THUS YOU CAN IMAGINE HIS EXCITEMENT WHEN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST PIONEERING AND RESPECTED BIOCHEMISTS WAS LODGED ON HIS BEAT BETWEEN THE GRIZZLY AND THAT MONOSYLLABIC RHINO.
"MIGHT I GIVE HIM SOME ADVICE, HE BEGGED? WOULD I SCRATCH HIS BACK LIKE HE'D SCRATCHED MINE? I WAS BORED, I TOLD HIM, AND HAD NOTHING ELSE TO DO. WHY NOT ENJOY THIS CHALLENGE?
"A POLAROID OF THE WOMAN'S IRIS CONFIRMED MY SUSPICION OF LYMPHATIC CONGESTION. MOST DOCTORS DISMISS THE AILMENT, BUT IT'S ALL VERY REAL AND PERHAPS BETTER KNOWN AS CHRONIC FATIGUE OR FIBROMYALGIA.
"I TOLD HIM I COULD CURE THIS QUITE EASILY. SHE DIDN'T EVEN NEED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS-- JUST A COMBINATION OF THINGS THEY'D HAVE AT HOME PLUS THE ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN YEAST AND DAIRY PRODUCTS."
WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED? SHE GOT BETTER...
...FOR A LITTLE WHILE AT LEAST.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

"WELL, SHE STARTED GETTING PAINS IN HER KIDNEYS LAST WEEK AND THEN HER NEUROLOGICAL FUNCTIONS BEGAN BREAKING DOWN.
"BY THE WEEKEND, THE ORIGINAL PAIN WAS BACK TEN TIMES WORSE THAN IT EVER WAS, AND BY YESTERDAY MORNING, SHE'D GONE COMPLETELY BLIND."
ONE OF THE CLEANERS WAS TELLING ME THIS MORNING SHE GOT RUSHED INTO THE HOSPITAL LAST NIGHT AND NEEDS A MACHINE TO BREATHE NOW.
THE BAD NEWS IS SHE'S NEVER COMING OUT OF THIS COMA AND, OH DEAR ME, I DO BELIEVE THAT POOR LITTLE WIFE WILL BE PUSHING UP THE DAISIES BY THE END OF THE WEEK.
NOW ASK ME AGAIN FOR THIS FAVOR YOU WANTED, PARKER. ASK ME AGAIN FOR HELP AFTER LOCKING ME UP AND RUINING MY BUSINESS AND ENDANGERING MY LIFE TO THIS DEGREE.
OH POOR BABY.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN ENDANGERING YOUR LIFE? YOU'RE IN A HIGH-SECURITY CELL. YOUR SKIN'S PRACTICALLY BULLET-PROOF.
ASK YOURSELF WHAT THEY WERE DOING WITH OTTO OCTAVIUS LAST NIGHT, PETER. ASK YOURSELF WHY ALL OF MY OFFICES ARE BEING BURGLARIZED RIGHT NOW.


I'm calling MJ every twenty minutes, but nothing's happening. An old friend named Liz Osborn was on the phone trying to talk her into a high-school reunion and it took nearly an hour to shake her off.
It must be BEAUTIFUL to have a normal life. I pause for a second and imagine what it must be like when your only concern is what to wear to an old school GET-TOGETHER.
What's Venom auctioning at this secret event uptown? Could it really be Aunt May? Could he really be behind all this?
Like anyone else who's exhausted all rational possibilities, I decide it's time I paid a visit to a PSYCHIC...
XAVIER INSTITUTE
HELLO PETER. WELCOME TO THE X-MANSION. YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR YOUR 8PM APPOINTMENT.
UH, WHO SAID MY NAME WAS "PETER"?
OH, I'M TERRIBLY SORRY. THE TEACHERS SAY IT'S VERY RUDE TO PEEK INSIDE SOMEONE'S HEAD WHENEVER THEY'RE WEARING THEIR MASK. PROMISE YOU WON'T TELL? I'LL BE IN BIG TROUBLE IF YOU DO.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I TAKE IT YOU'RE ONE OF THE, UH, TELEPATHS HERE, RIGHT? LIKE JEAN GREY USED TO BE?
DON'T BE SILLY. WHY WOULD I BE OFFENDED? WOULD IT BOTHER YOU IF I CALLED YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS HOMO SAPIENS?

WHAT? I'M SORRY. I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
GOD, I'M SUCH AN IDIOT. I WAS ANSWERING THE QUESTION YOU'RE GOING TO ASK SIXTY SECONDS FROM NOW, SPIDER-MAN.
MY TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVE IS STILL KIND OF SCREWY AT THE MOMENT, AND A LOT OF MY CHAT COMES OUT REALLY JUMBLED.
UH, RIGHT LISTEN, DO YOU REALLY THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO LEAVE YOUR GATES OPEN LIKE THIS? I MEAN, THERE'S STILL A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO KINDA HAVE A PROBLEM WITH MUTANTS
OH, I KNOW, I'VE SEEN THEM STANDING OUT THERE WITH THEIR SIGNS AND STUFF, BUT THEY NEVER ACTUALLY SET FOOT ON THE GROUNDS OF THE SCHOOL OR ANYTHING. NOBODY'S THAT STUPID, RIGHT?
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ME USING THE WORD "MUTANT", BY THE WAY. I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHAT THE POLITICALLY CORRECT WORD IS THESE DAYS. IT KINDA CHANGES ALL THE TIME.
DON'T BE SILLY. WHY WOULD I BE OFFENDED? WOULD IT BOTHER YOU IF I CALLED YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS HOMO SAPIENS?
UH, NO. I GUESS NOT.
THAT WAS THE QUESTION I WAS ANSWERING EARLIER, BY THE WAY.
OH RIGHT.
NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, SPIDER-MAN. MISS FROST ASKED ME TO PASS ALONG HER APOLOGIES, BUT SHE HAD TO DISAPPEAR ON AN X-MEN EMERGENCY WITH MY DAD AND A COUPLE OF THE OTHER GUYS
APPARENTLY, SOME KID IN SAN ANTONIO TURNED INTO A SENTIENT THERMONUCLEAR REACTOR AND, WELL, YOU KNOW HOW THESE THINGS GO

I'M RACHEL SUMMERS, IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, AND I'M AS QUALIFIED AS EMMA TO HELP YOU WITH THIS MISSING PERSONS THING.
WOW ANYBODY EVER SAY YOU LOOK A LOT LIKE...
JEAN GREY? ACTUALLY, I'M HER DAUGHTER FROM A PARALLEL FUTURE TIMELINE. SHE AND CYCLOPS ARE MY BIRTH-PARENTS, BUT THAT REALITY DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE SO I MOSTLY JUST HANG OUT HERE THESE DAYS.
YOU KNOW WHAT? NEXT TIME SOMEBODY SAID ALL MY CLONES WERE FAR-FETCHED, I'M GOING TO SEND THEM OVER HERE.
HA! YOU'RE FUNNY.
DID YOU REMEMBER THE PIECE OF JEWELRY WE ASKED YOU TO BRING? JEWELRY SEEMS TO WORK BEST WHEN WE'RE TRYING TO FIND A WOMAN FOR SOME REASON NOBODY REALLY KNOWS WHY.
UH, SURE. I GOT HER OLD ENGAGEMENT RING HERE...
OOH, SHE WAS SPUNKY, WASN'T SHE? WHITE HAIR, BLUE EYES AND A BEAUTIFUL, HEARTY LAUGH. SHE WAS ALSO INCREDIBLY SAD, BUT YOU BROUGHT A LOT OF LIGHT INTO HER LIFE, YOU KNOW THAT? SHE ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE...

OH, GOD. THIS WAS VIOLENT, WASN'T IT?
YEAH.
SHE'D JUST MOVED INTO A NEW PLACE YOU AND THE RED-HEADED GIRL HAD PAID FOR IT AND SHE ABSOLUTELY LOVED LIVING IN MANHATTAN, BUT SHE WAS REALLY, REALLY WORRIED THAT YOU GUYS COULDN'T AFFORD IT
SHE LOVED THE RED-HEAD, TOO, INCIDENTALLY. SHE JUST THOUGHT SHE WAS A LITTLE CRAZY SOMETIMES AND...
OH, MAN.
WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT ARE YOU SEEING?
SHE HAD THE CHAIN ON THE DOOR, BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER. SHE THOUGHT IT WAS A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS, BUT HE SNAPPED THE CHAIN LIKE IT WAS MADE OF LICORICE, AND THEN HE HELD HER UP AGAINST THE WALL AND...
WHAT? WHAT?
SHE PASSED OUT, BUT SHE KNEW HIM, SPIDER-MAN. YOU KNOW HIM, TOO, BUT HE'S DIFFERENT FROM HOW HE USED TO BE. HE'S NOT HUMAN ANYMORE. HE'S... OH, GOD. SHE WAS SO SCARED.
WHO DID IT, RACHEL? WAS IT VENOM? WAS IT EDDIE BROCK?
I DON'T KNOW. I COULDN'T SEE
THINK HARD!
I DON'T KNOW!

OKAY, TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHERE SHE IS NOW, PLEASE. TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHERE THIS GUY TOOK HER...
I'M THINKING, I'M THINKING THIS ISN'T THE KIND OF STUFF I USUALLY DO. PROFESSOR X WAS THE ONE WHO SPECIALIZED IN MISSING PERSONS, BUT I'M DEFINITELY GETTING SOME INFORMATION HERE.
IT'S VAGUE. I MEAN, THIS RING MUST BE REALLY OLD, BUT...
WHAT?
I DON'T THINK IT'S GOOD
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU DON'T THINK IT'S GOOD? THE INFORMATION ISN'T GOOD? IS IT BAD NEWS?
I'M NOT SURE YOU WANT TO HEAR THIS, SPIDER-MAN...
PLEASE!
JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE SEEING HERE, RACHEL!

I THINK YOUR AUNT MAY'S DEAD...

Elsewhere:
HEY, SADIE. THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL COAT YOU GOT THERE, SWEETHEART. IS THAT TIGER SKIN? I BEEN ASKING YOUR FRIEND THE SANDMAN HERE TO GET ME ONE OF THOSE THINGS FOR YEARS.
OH, THIS AIN'T NO ANIMAL SKIN, JOANNIE. ME AND MORRIE WOULD NEVER SUPPORT WHAT THEY BEEN DOING TO THOSE BEAUTIFUL BEASTS OUT THERE IN AFRICA AND ENGLAND AND STUFF.
NO, THIS LITTLE BEAUTY USED TO BE ONE OF THE AVENGERS.
WHAT?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER TIGRA? THE CUTE CAT-GIRL WITH THE BIG, GREEN EYES? KRAVEN THE HUNTER SOLD US THIS FOR A HUNDRED-THOUSAND BUCKS THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS.
YOU HEAR THAT, FLINT? A HUNDRED-THOUSAND BUCKS AND YOU KNOW WHAT ELSE HE'S GONNA MAKE FOR US? A LIZARD-SKIN HANDBAG OUTTA THAT LUNATIC CURT CONNORS. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT, BIG SHOT?
AH, KRAVEN'S KID'S AS PHONY AS HIS OLD MAN, MORRIE.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY, HUH?
JUST THAT THAT AIN'T TIGRA OVER THERE. TIGRA'S BEEN LIVING IN L.A. FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS. SHE TEAMED UP WITH WONDER MAN AGAINST BOOMERANG JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO
OH, YEAH. AND YOU'RE SUCH AN EXPERT ON TIGRA, RIGHT?
BOOMERANG'S MARRIED TO MY COUSIN, YOU MORON. SHE HAD HIM BANGED UP AT THE END OF LAST MONTH AND STILL LOOKED PRETTY HAIRY IN HER NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPHS.

WHAT?
LISTEN, SADIE, BEFORE YOU GO NUTS HERE...
YOU LIKE MAKING ME LOOK *STUPID*, MORRIE? BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE *DONE*, YOU IDIOT.
NOW YOU GET IN THERE AND BUY ME THIS *COSTUME* THEY'RE AUCTIONING OR I'LL...
HEY, MISTER FORTUNATO? WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE, MAN? YOU THINKING ABOUT GETTING INTO THE WHOLE *COSTUME* THING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?
AH, I NEVER HAD THE LEGS FOR THE OLD SPANDEX, HERMAN. I'M JUST HERE TO PUT IN A BID AND SEE IF THIS SUPER-VILLAIN SUIT COULD MAYBE MAKE SOMETHING OF MY BOY *ANGELO* HERE.
YOU SEEN THIS LITTLE WASTE OF SPACE? YOU BELIEVE IT'S FROM THE SAME FINE WOMB THAT GAVE ME MY BEAUTIFUL GIACOMO?
WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT YOU NEED TO BUY A NAME AND A COSTUME FOR? YOU BEEN THE SHOCKER AS LONG AS GREEN GOBLIN'S BEEN AROUND.
THAT'S EXACTLY THE POINT. ALL THOSE YEARS AND ALL THOSE JOBS AND I *STILL* NEVER MADE MUCH IMPACT.
I'M HERE TO BUY MYSELF A LITTLE RESPECTABILITY.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IF I COULD ASK YOU ALL TO TAKE YOUR SEATS, PLEASE. WE DON'T HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND OUR VERY SPECIAL GUEST DOESN'T LIKE TO BE KEPT WAITING...

YOU ALL KNOW ME. YOU ALL KNOW MY REPUTATION WHEN IT COMES TO SUPPLYING HIGH-QUALITY WEAPONS, NAMES AND COSTUMES.
SO BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THAT WHAT I HAVE FOR YOU TONIGHT JUST OUTCLASSES ANYTHING WE EVER SOLD ON THE MARKET BEFORE.
THIS IS NOT THE BEETLE MOVING ON AND SELLING UP. THIS IS NOT THE LOOTER TRYING TO MAKE A LITTLE CASH.
THIS IS A CLASS ONE SUPER-CRIMINAL WHO'S BEEN FEATURED ON THE FBI'S MOST WANTED MORE CONSISTENTLY THAN ANYONE OUTSIDE MAGNETO, RED SKULL, OR VICTOR VON DOOM HIMSELF.
WE LIVE IN A VERY DANGEROUS WORLD, MY FRIENDS. OUR CHOSEN PROFESSION HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE AND I DO NOT HAVE TO REMIND YOU ABOUT THE SCARS INFLICTED ON THE VULTURE THESE LAST FEW DAYS.
PURELY A BUSINESS DECISION, MY DEAR TINKERER. PURELY A BUSINESS DECISION.
WHAT I'M OFFERING YOU TONIGHT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT YOURSELVES LIKE YOU NEVER HAVE BEFORE. WHAT I'M OFFERING YOU NOW IS A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME SHOT AT THE MAJOR LEAGUES...
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, TONIGHT'S AUCTION IS FOR VENOM HIMSELF.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THAT AIN'T VENOM!
NO, MISTER MARKO, THIS GENTLEMAN IS EDDIE BROCK, VENOM'S HUMAN HOST. MISTER BROCK AND VENOM COEXIST IN A STRANGE, SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WHERE EACH PARTY REQUIRES THE OTHER TO SURVIVE.
VENOM, AS YOU MAY HAVE HEARD, IS A SUPER-POWERED, ALIEN PARASITE. MISTER BROCK, UNFORTUNATELY, HAS CANCER AND WOULDN'T LIVE SIX MONTHS WERE HE DISCONNECTED FROM THIS OPPORTUNISTIC ORGANISM.
SO WHY ARE WE HERE?
BECAUSE, MY OLD FRIEND, MISTER BROCK HAS SEEN A CERTAIN MEL GIBSON MOVIE, WHICH, HE SAYS, HAS CHANGED HIS LIFE FOREVER, AND NOW HE WISHES TO EXORCISE THIS BEAST FROM HIS HEART.
HE'S HAD A CRISIS OF FAITH, IT SEEMS, AND TELLS ME THAT HE'S READY TO SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ILLNESS NOW. HE'S GIVING THE ALIEN UP TO WHOEVER MAKES THE MOST GENEROUS OFFER.
AUCTIONING A PSYCHOTIC KILLER TO A GANG OF SUPER-VILLAINS? THAT DOESN'T SOUND TOO CHRIST-LIKE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING, BROCK? GIVING THE PROCEEDS TO CHARITY?
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING, MYSTERIO. THE PIECE OF TRASH WOULD ONLY FIND A NEW HOST ANYWAY, AND AT LEAST THIS WAY ALL THAT DIRTY MONEY YOU GUYS BID GOES TO A GOOD CAUSE.
WELL SAID, MISTER BROCK.
NATURALLY, YOU'LL WANT TO CHECK THE GOODS BEFORE YOU MAKE A BID, SO I'D LIKE TO WARN ANY EPILEPTICS IN THE AUDIENCE TO LOOK AWAY FOR A SECOND AS OUR FRIEND HERE GETS INTO CHARACTER.
WHEN-EVER YOU'RE READY, MISTER BROCK?
JEEZUS!
I THINK I'M GONNA HEAVE...

VENOMOUS

PART TWO OF FOUR

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